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IDPs and Best Practices

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USDA

Agenda

- The IDP as a trusted source document
- The IDP tennis ball approach
- Creating and submitting an IDP
- Adding Goal Activities
- Trouble Shooting and Best Practices
- Available Training Resources on IDPs

2

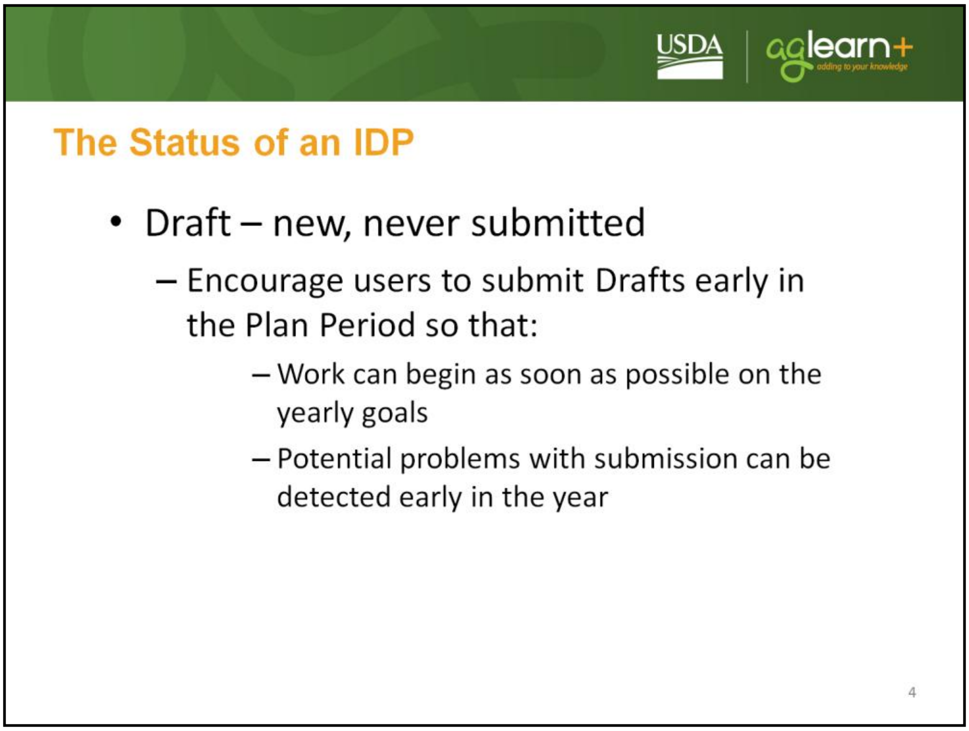
The AgLearn online IDP has a number of characteristics that are quite different from the paper form you may have been used to, which is one reason for this webinar today. We'll explain the concept of trusted source documents so that you can understand the underlying reasons for creating and submitting IDPs in the recommended fashion. I'll define the IDP tennis ball approach that governs when to edit and submit updates and changes to your IDP. I'll step you through the process of creating and submitting an IDP as well as adding activities to IDP goals to help accomplish those goals. Finally I'll identify some best practices and troubleshooting tips that we've learned from our current experiences with agencies implementing online IDPs and I'll point out available training resources in AgLearn.

IDP - a Trusted Source Document

- Employee and Supervisor:
  - are the authoritative owners of the employee's IDP
  - are responsible for maintaining the accuracy and timeliness of the IDP
  - are aware that other parts of the agency may consume this information for planning purposes
  - are aware of the control mechanisms in place to secure and protect the information in the IDP

3

Let's start by introducing the term trusted source document. For the AgLearn IDP, this means that only those people who are the authoritative owners of the learner's IDP can modify and maintain the document. While an agency may use the data in the IDP to identify trends, no other persons, including AgLearn administrators, can make changes to this document. Both the user and the supervisor must be aware of the control mechanisms that protect the IDP. One of the most important controls is the fact that all changes and updates must be documented by the user and the supervisor, and all changes must be submitted and approved before the end of the plan period.

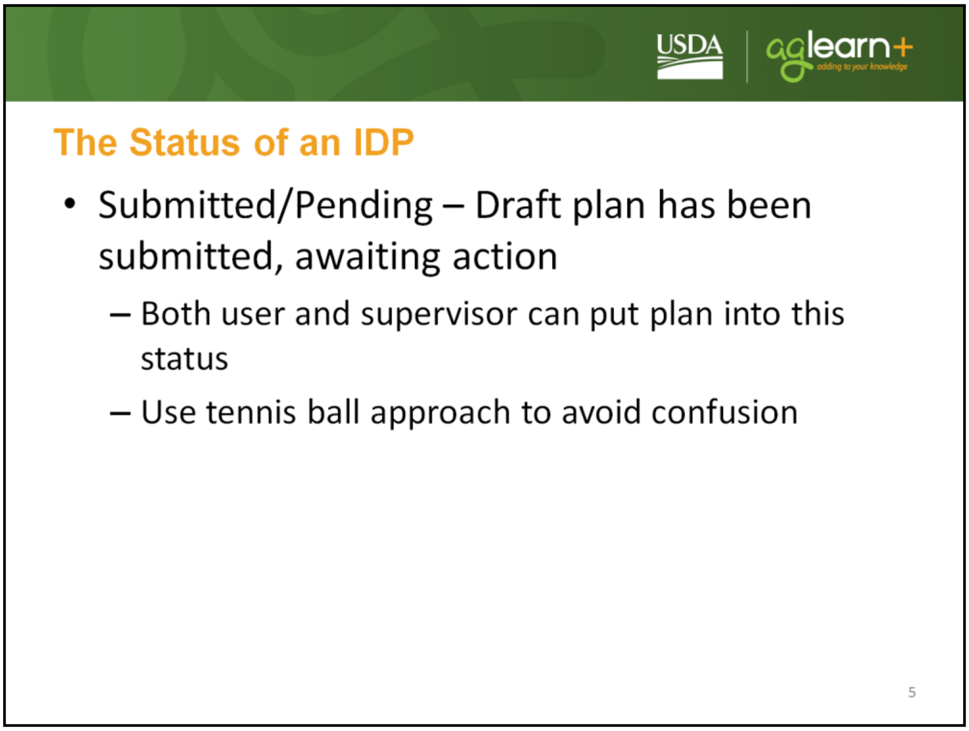


As the plan moves between subordinate and supervisor, it changes status. It is very important to understand what changes the status of an IDP and what action is necessary when it is in that status.

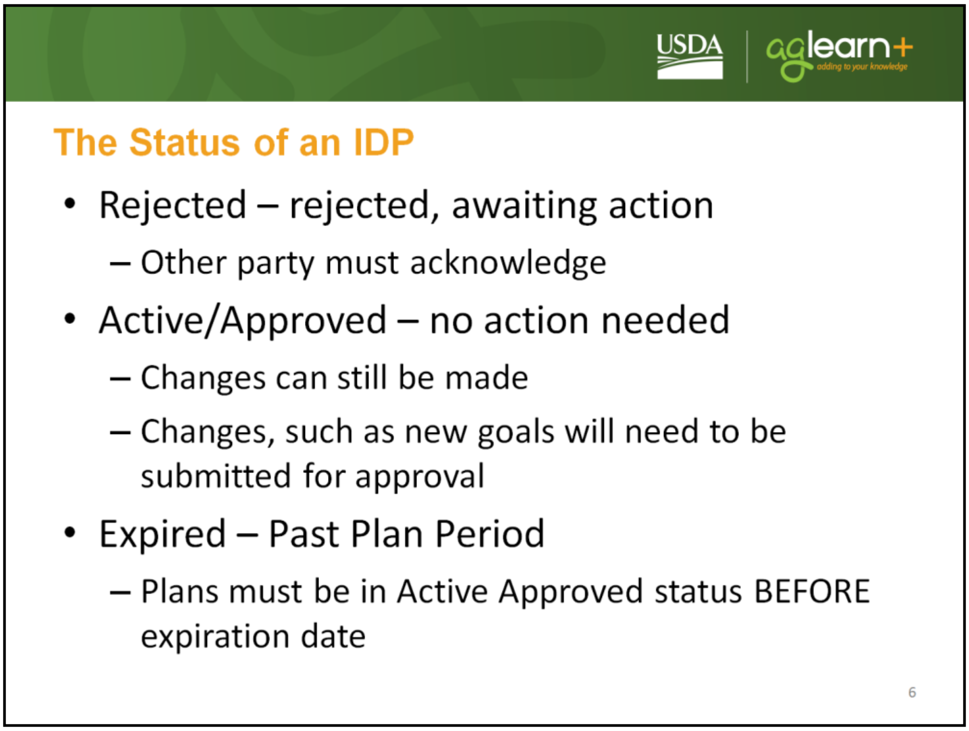
When a subordinate first creates an IDP, it is in the Draft status. We want to get it out of this status and off to the supervisor for approval as soon as possible. The reason for this is twofold:

First, we want to encourage the employee to think about his plan for the upcoming year and discuss it with his supervisor so that it can be submitted and approved and he can then have much of the full year to begin working on that plan.

The second reason is that we won't know if older plans might be a potential problem until the Draft plan tries to move into a Submit/Pending status. For example, if the employee creates a plan but decides not to submit it until nearly the end of the year, we won't know until he does decide to submit it, that he doesn't see a Submit for Approval button.



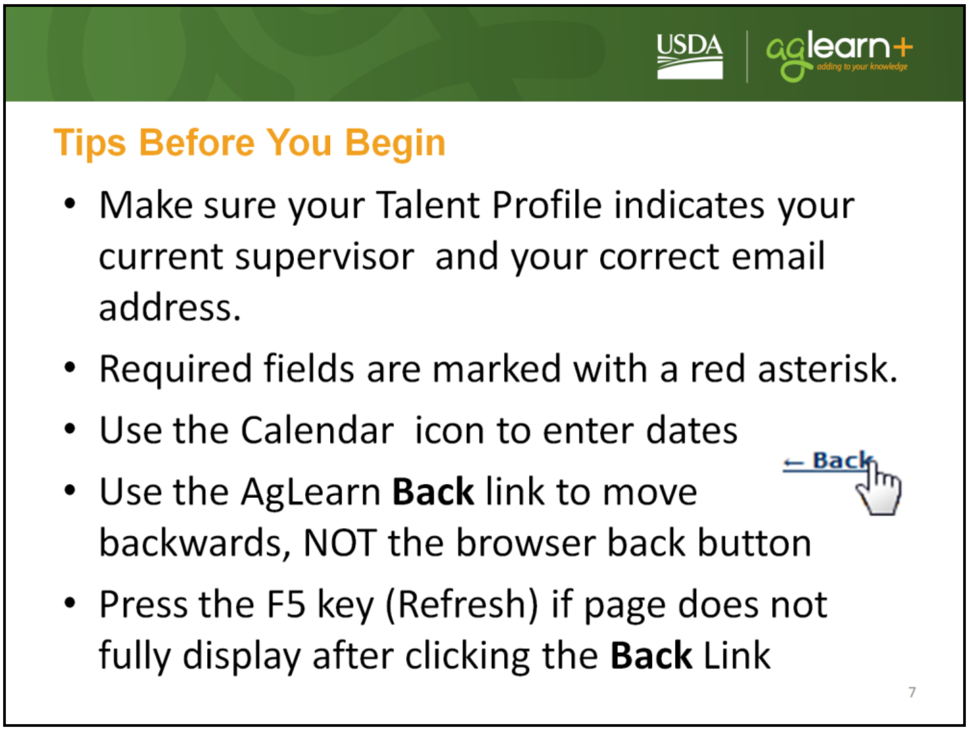
Once the subordinate submits the IDP, it moves into Submit Pending status. That means that the plan is now awaiting action by the other party. Both the user and the supervisor can put a plan into Submit Pending status. As the plan goes back and forth between supervisor and subordinate, whoever makes changes to the plan will have to have those changes approved by the other party. That's why we encourage you to use the tennis ball approach and recommend that changes be made only when the IDP has been submitted to you.



If one of the parties, most likely the supervisor, rejects the plan, it must still receive an action by the other party. This has caused some confusion. The action that must be performed is a review. The other party must acknowledge that the plan has been rejected. At that point the plan can be modified or a new plan can be created.

If the plan is Approved, it moves into an Active Approved status. At this point additional changes can still be made, but if they are significant changes, such as new goals, they must be submitted for approval by the other party.

A plan that proceeds normally through the IDP process should be in an Active Approved status before it reaches the end of the plan period. That means that any changes, updates, additions, etc must be documented and submitted for a final approval well before the end of the plan period so that the supervisor can approve the plan one last time. As the Active/Approved plan moves past the last day of the plan period, the status automatically changes from Active/Approved to Expired. If the plan is not in an Active Approved status when the plan period ends, it can cause problems and we'll talk about how to resolve those problems in this session.

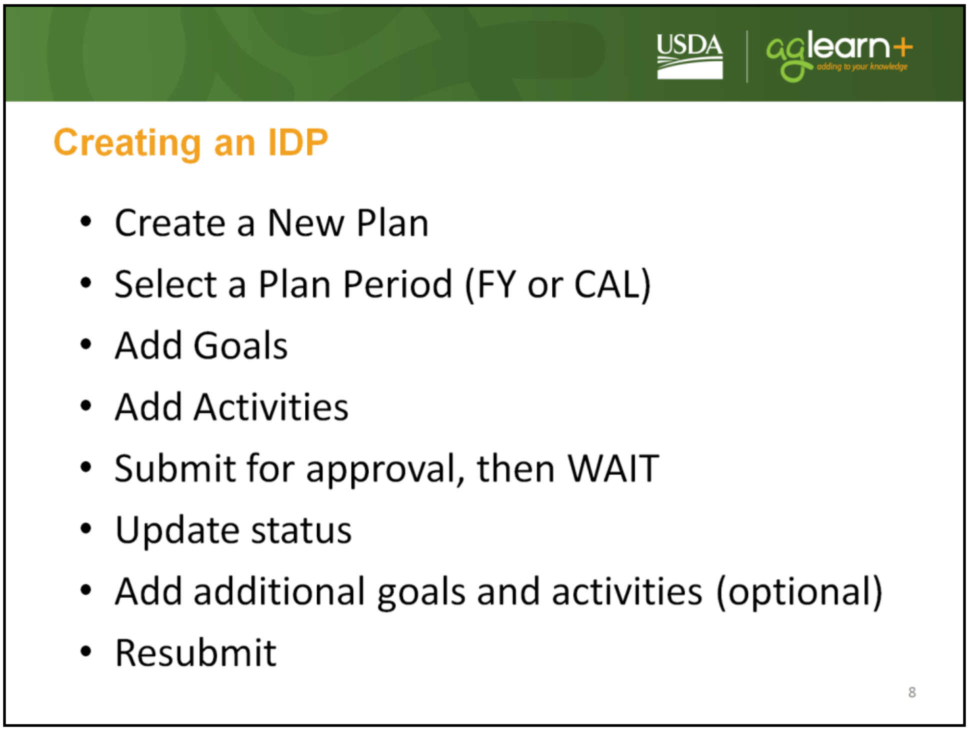


Before users begin to create their IDPs, they must make sure their current supervisor and correct email address is in AgLearn. I'll provide a link to a job aid later in this session if they don't know how to do this.

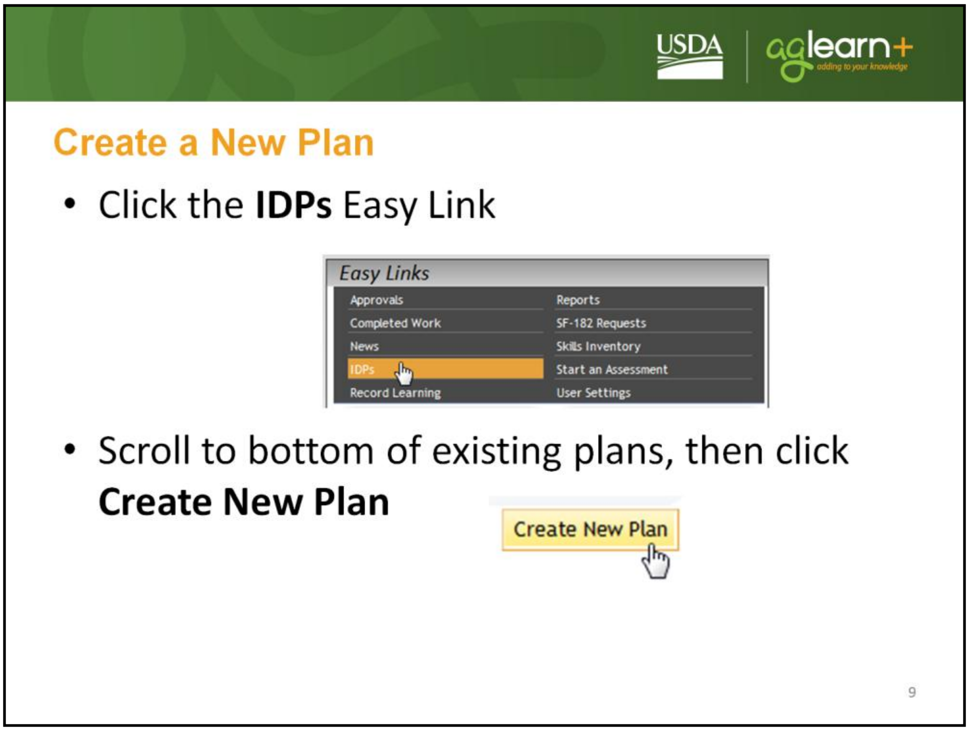
Required fields are marked with red asterisks. As we move through the next few screens, I'll point out the required fields and fields that are helpful to fill in even if they aren't required.

It's a good idea to use the calendar icon to fill in dates so that no mistakes are made in formatting.

Also, remind users not use the Browser back button but to always use the Back link icon to move to previous screens in AgLearn. Occasionally after clicking the Back Link, the screen may not fully display. Simply advise users to Refresh or reload their screen by pressing the F5 key.



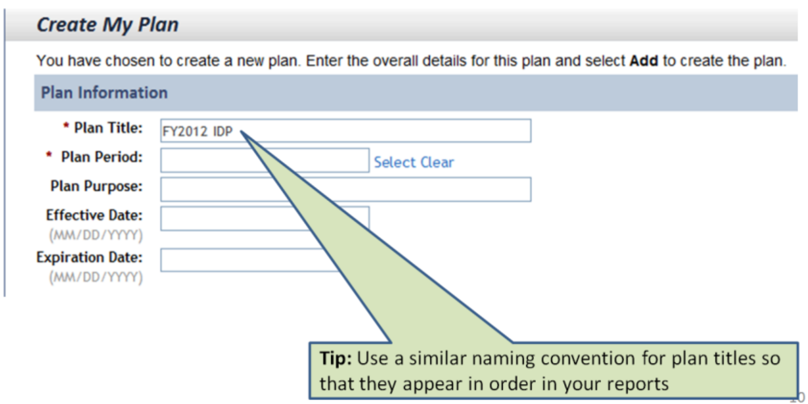
On the next few screens I'll walk you through the creation of an IDP. Then I'll demonstrate how to add goals and activities for the upcoming year and then how to submit the plan for approval.



in the Easy Links area, click the IDPs link to reach the My IDPs page. Here, you will click a button to **Create a New Plan**.

Add Information to Your Plan

- Enter a title for your Plan (e.g., FY2012 IDP)



Then enter a plan title.

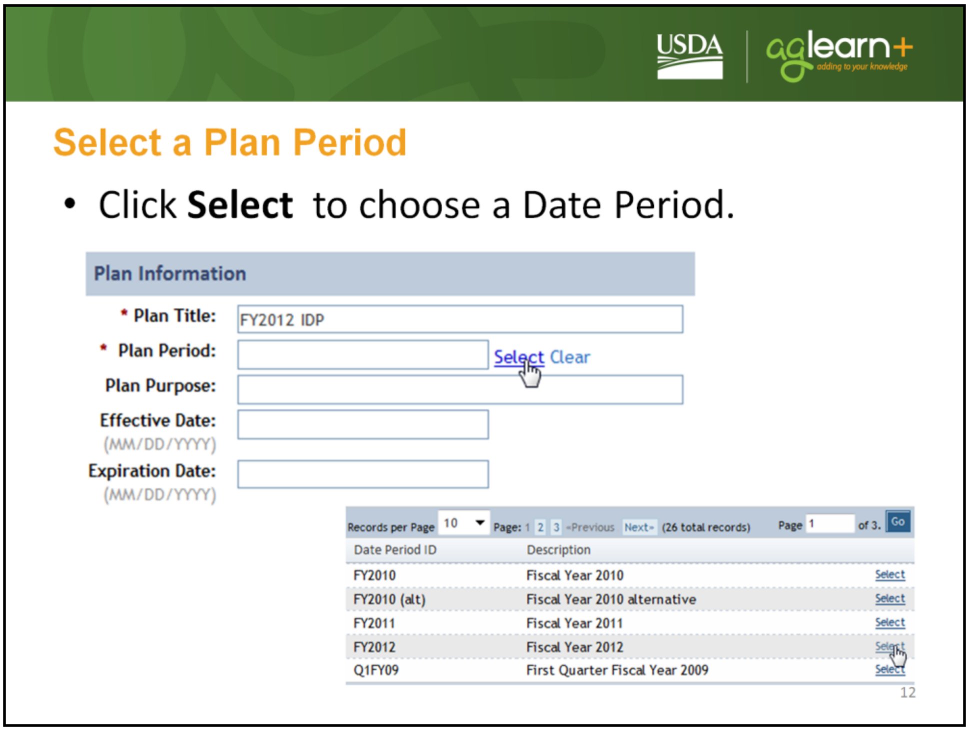
Here's a tip: If you are submitting Fiscal Year Plans, name them using a similar naming convention so that they appear in order when you create reports. For Example, name your plans FY11, FY12 or Kathy's Fiscal Year 2011, Kathy's Fiscal Year 2012, etc. A Best practice is to name your plans so they appear in order.

Select a Plan Period

- Click Select (next to Plan Period).

11

Next, you'll need to select a plan period.



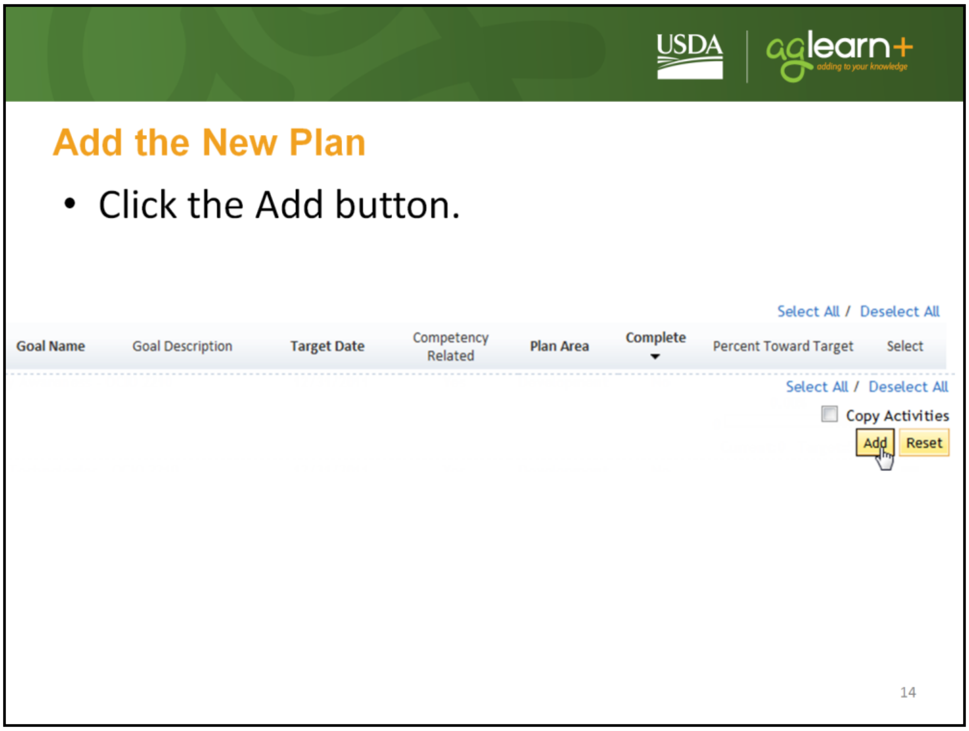
In this example I'm selecting the Fiscal Year 2012 Plan Period

Review the IDP Dates

- Choosing a Plan Period from the list automatically populates the Effective Date & Expiration Date.

13

That will automatically populate the Effective Date and Expiration Date fields.



Now you'll click **Add** to create the shell of your new Plan. Next we'll add our first goal.

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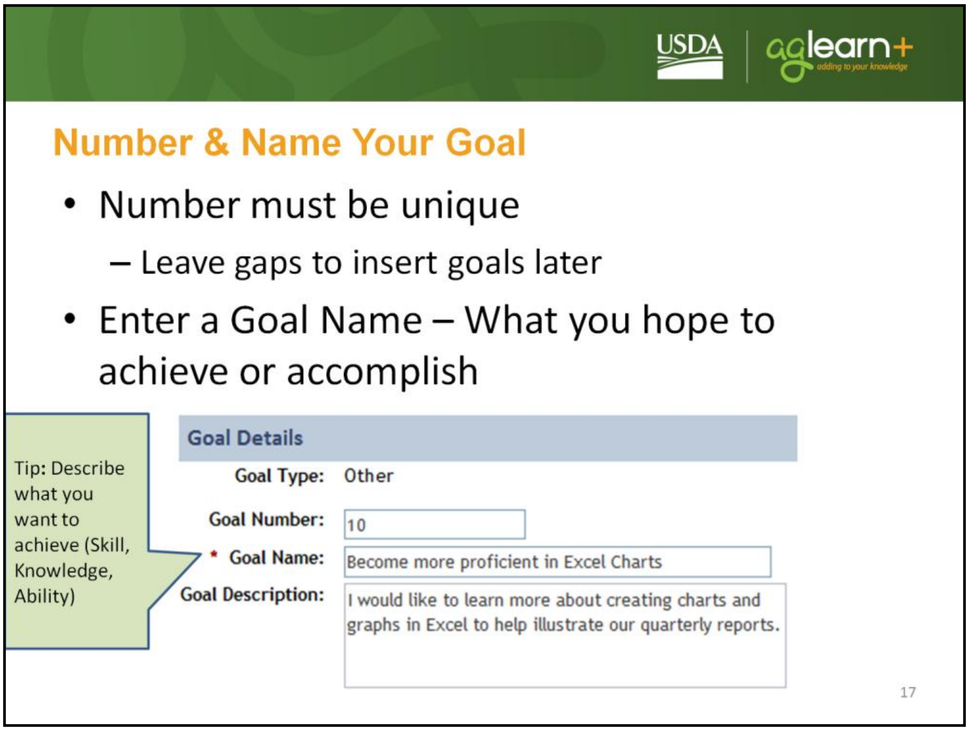
Adding Goals

- What you want to learn
  - Measurable target, tied to a calendar date
- Each Plan needs at least one Goal
- Required fields:
  - Goal Name
  - Target Date

15

Goals need to be measurable and tied to a specific date, and as I said, each plan must have at least one goal. Each goal can have a number of fields that help to define the goal, but the required fields are only the goal name and the Target Date.

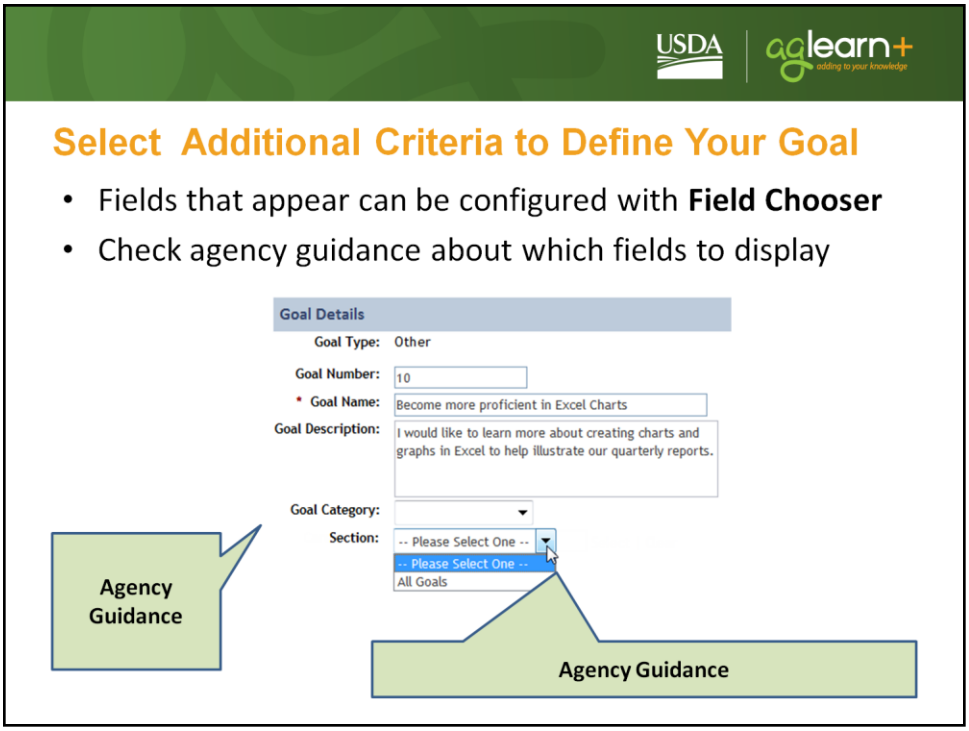
If you have had competencies assigned to you prior to the creation of this IDP, you may see that your brand new IDP already has a number of goals defined. If you haven't had competencies assigned, you'll need to create your IDPs first goal. To create a goal, click the **New Goal** button.



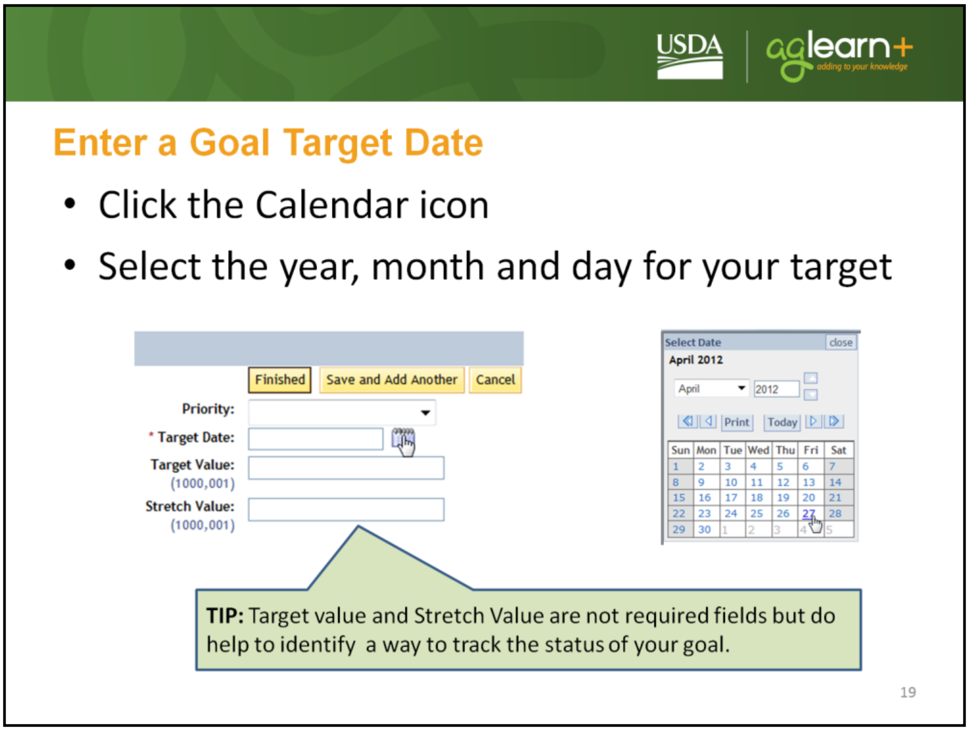
The goal number is not a required field, but it can help to keep your goals in order. The number must be unique, so if you may want to leave gaps between goal numbers to insert interim goals later. Enter a name for your goal.

The goal should describe what you want to achieve. For example you might want to become more proficient in your leadership capabilities, or increase your skills in oral presentation. If you have training in mind, think of the purpose or goal of the course, that would be an excellent IDP goal.

In this example, the user has entered a goal to become more proficient in Excel Charts. Notice that the Goal Description is not a required field, but it might be helpful to more clearly identify exactly what you hope to accomplish. Your agency may have additional requirements about what your goal or goal description should include. My recommendation is that you think of the goal as what you hope to achieve or accomplish. Once the goal is identified, you will later create the goal's activity to define what you will do to achieve that goal. The activity is where you will usually define the training you wish to take to achieve the goal.

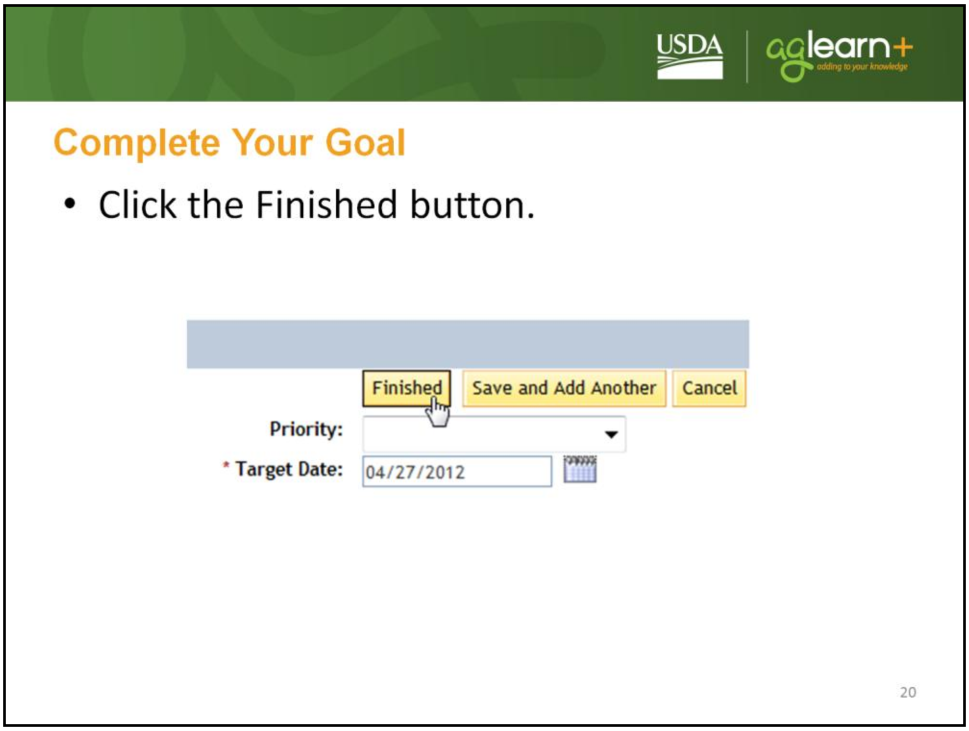


The fields below the Goal Description are not required fields, but some agencies have guidance about these fields and how they should further identify or define a goal. You will need to check your agency's guidance for any instruction about these fields. For the purpose of this generic presentation, they are not required fields and we won't address them here.



The only other required field is the goal target date. Click the calendar icon to select a date in the future by which you plan to complete your goal.

Just a quick tip about the Target Value and the Stretch value. You'll notice they are not required fields, but they can help track your progress. For example if your goal is to attend 3 Lunchbytes sessions this year, your Target Goal would be 3. Your stretch goal might be to attend 5 sessions this year, so your stretch goal would be five. You'll be able to track your progress towards meeting this goal by entering a number in a "Current" field and compare that to the Target and Stretch fields. Again, these are not required fields, but I always get questions on how they might be used.



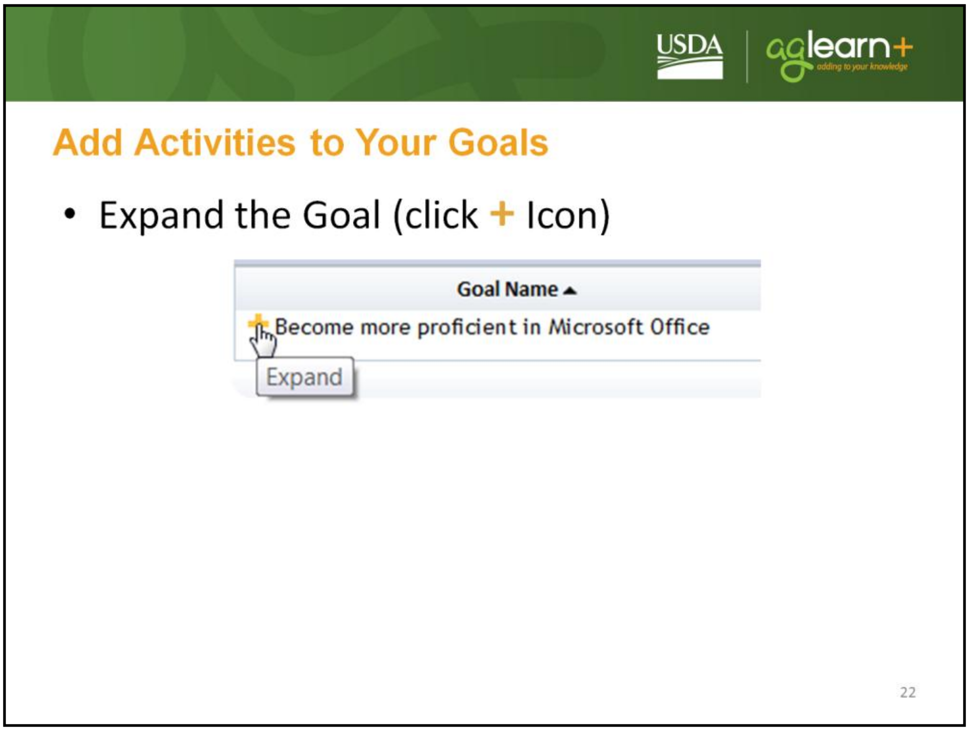
Now that you've identified your goal (to become more proficient in Excel Charts), click the **Finished** button. Our next step will be to add an Activity to define exactly how we plan to meet our established goal.

Activities

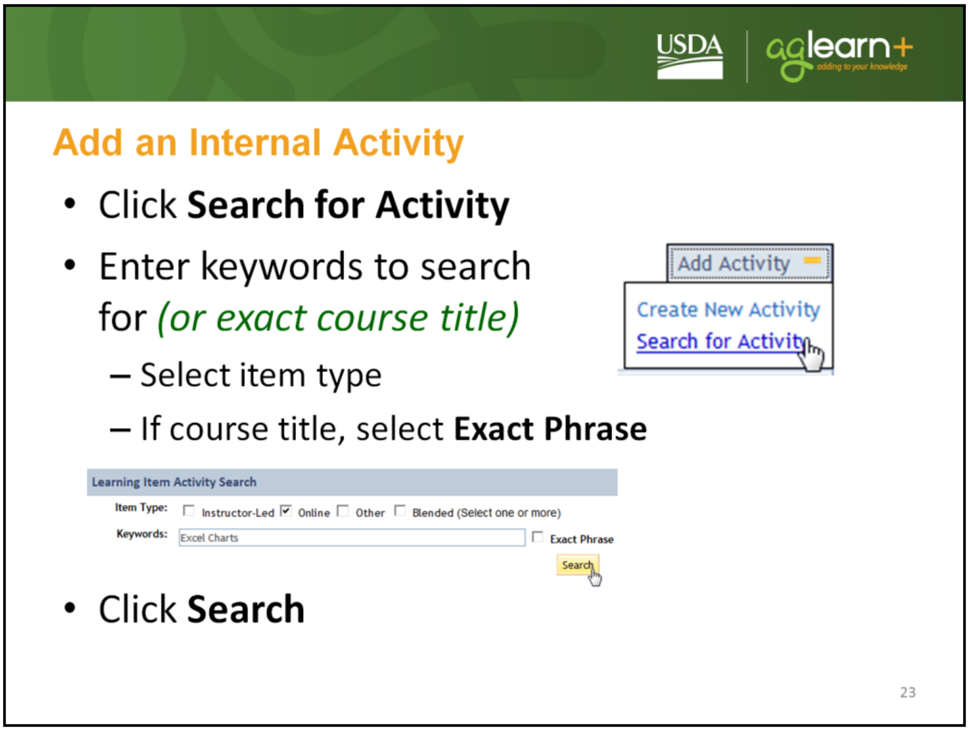
- What you will do to reach your Goals
  - Classes, conferences, online learning
  - OTJ training, committees, etc.
- Two types of Activities:
  - External
  - Internal
- Required fields:
  - Activity Name
  - Target Date

21

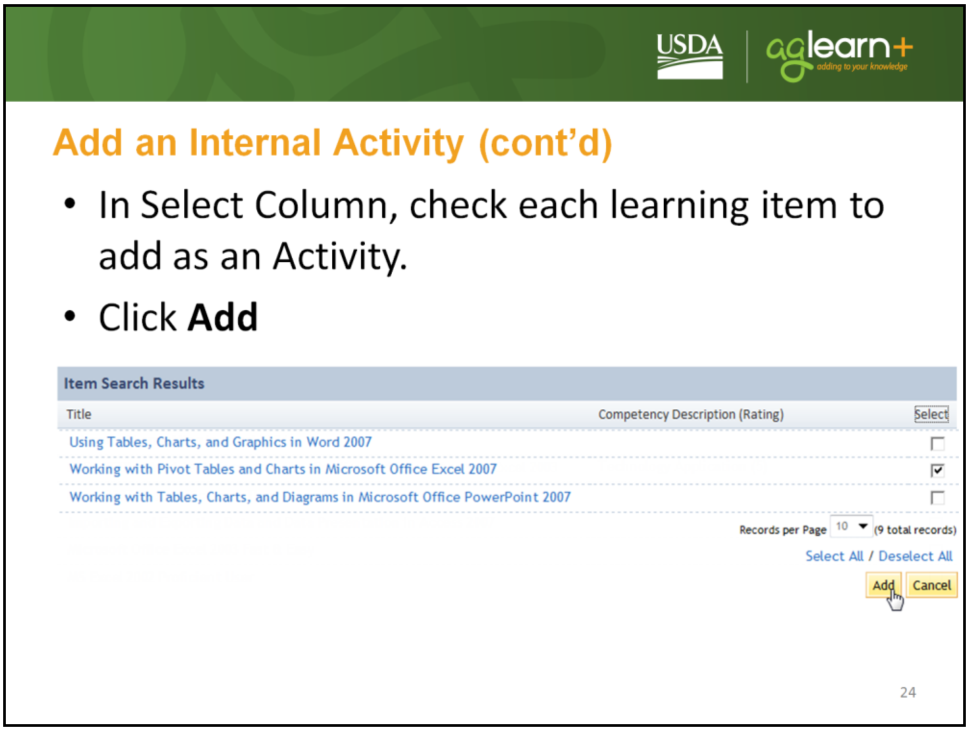
Activities can be attached to goals by you or your supervisor to identify what things you might do to help you reach your Goals. For example, if my goal is to become more proficient in Excel Charts, I might add an activity that would involve taking an AgLearn course that covers advanced topics like Excel Charts. That would be considered an internal activity, so I'll be able to search for it in AgLearn. Activities that don't involve AgLearn resources are external activities and I'll need to create and describe that activity as best I can in the IDP. I'll demonstrate both here.



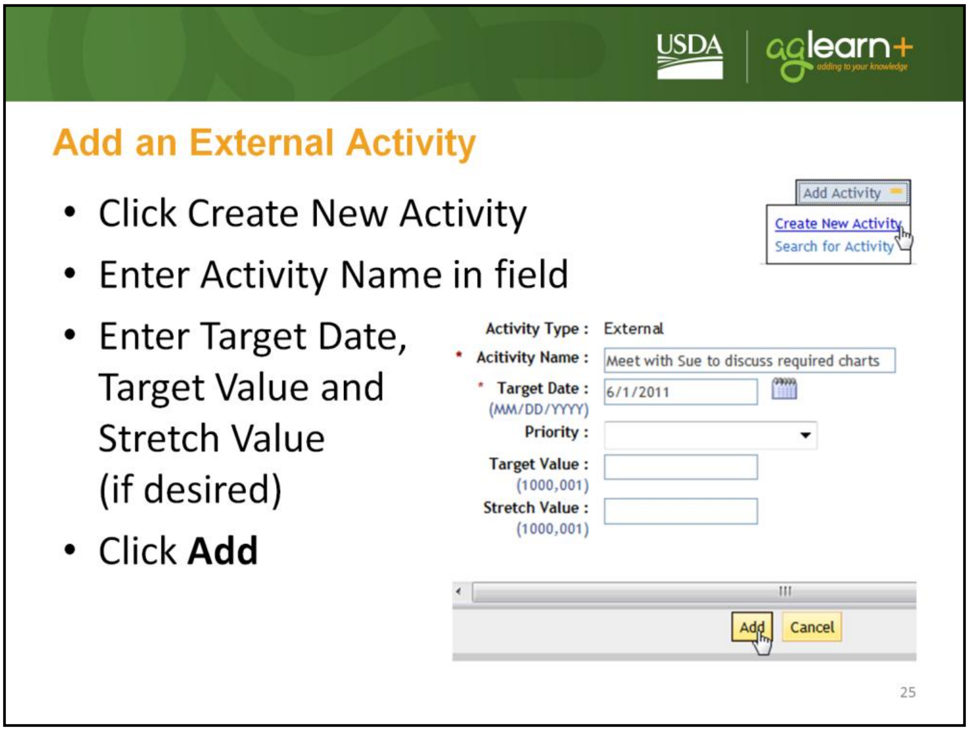
To add an activity to a goal, I simply expand the Goal by clicking the plus sign



Once expanded, I'll see an Add Activity button to the right. To add an Internal Activity, I'll select **Search for Activity** to search for the item in AgLearn using the Search tool. In this example, I'll select the Online course criteria, then enter the phrase **excel charts**, to see what online courses might be available in AgLearn. Then I'll click Search

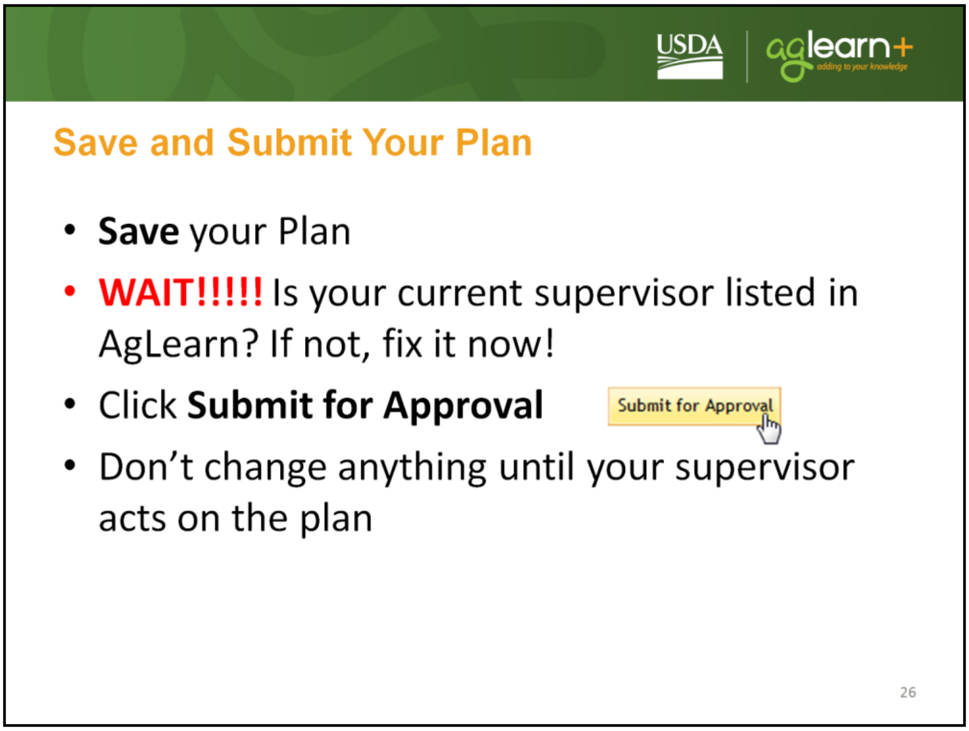


A list of courses will appear, and I'll select the course that I and click **Add** to add it to my IDP and to my learning plan



But what if my goal to become more proficient in Excel Charts is more than just taking an online course? What if my supervisor thinks it might be a good idea to meet with an expert in my organization for some demonstrations of how excel charts are used to produce the reports needed by the agency? OR, what if I need to take training that is not available in AgLearn? This type of activity is not something that I can search for in AgLearn, but it is an activity that will help me to reach my goal.

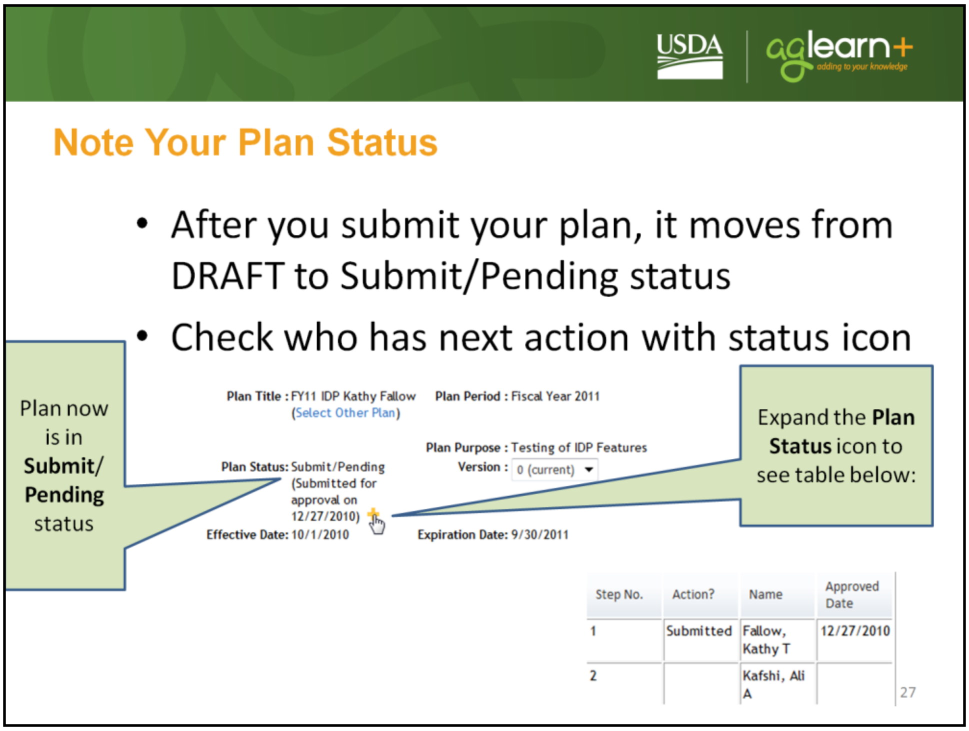
This type of activity is called an external activity. Instead of searching for the activity, I'll choose Create New Activity, and will then fill in the fields that appear to best describe how the activity will help to achieve my goal. Once created, I can also use the Activity's Notes field to add additional information about the external activity, such as the name and location of the external course, and any cost data that might be available at the time.



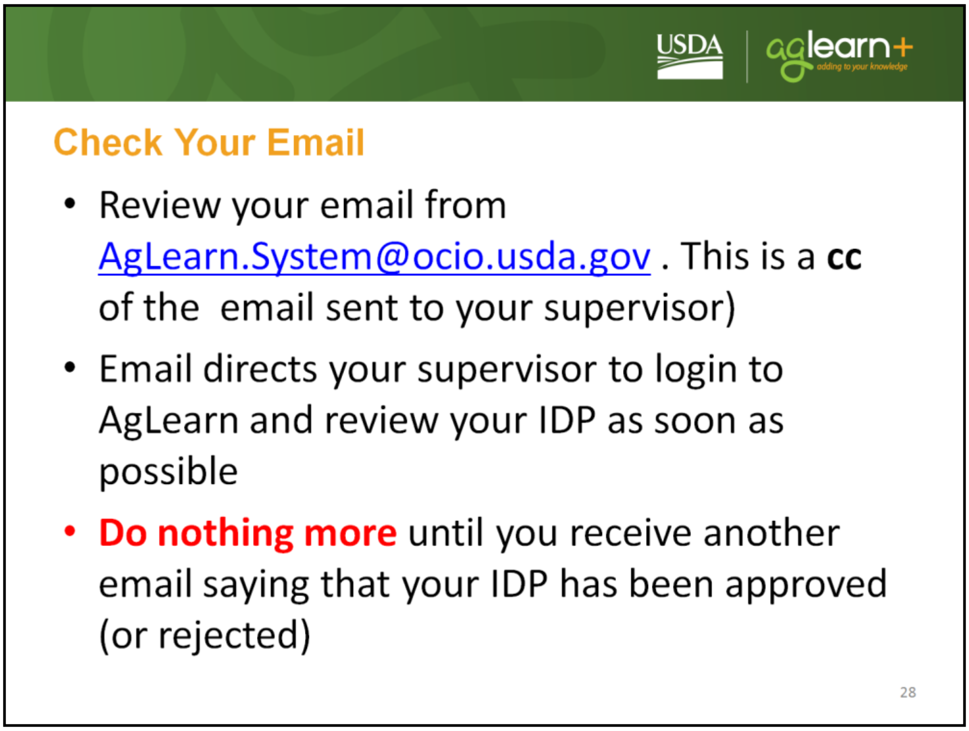
That's basically all there is to it, regarding adding a goal and defining how you'll reach that goal by adding activities.

Once I've created my initial set of goals and activities, I'll click the Save button to save my plan. Now, here's another BIG TIP. Make ***absolutely sure*** your current supervisor is listed in AgLearn. If you're not sure, you can leave your IDP (you've saved it), and go to your profile from the AgLearn home page. This is one of the most common errors that users make regarding IDPs. They submit their plan when either the wrong supervisor is listed in AgLearn or no supervisor is listed in AgLearn.

Once you've made sure your current supervisor is listed in AgLearn, return to your IDP and click the **Submit for Approval** button. At this point, think of the IDP as a tennis ball that you've just hit over the net to your supervisor. Do nothing more until your supervisor takes action!

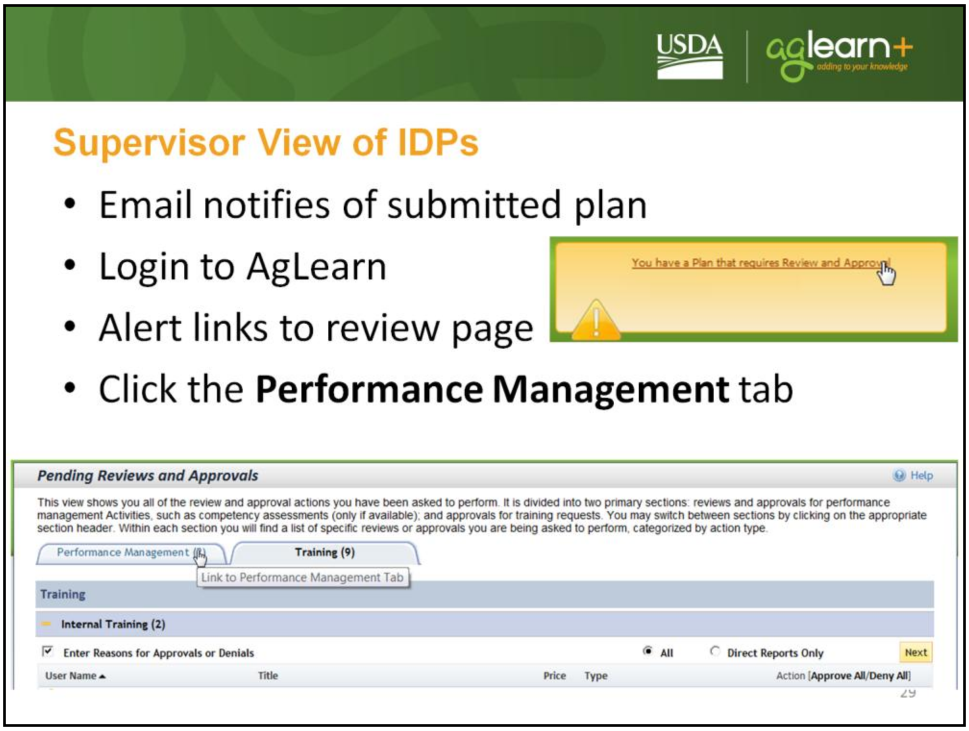


After you've submitted your plan, you'll notice that your plan status has changed from DRAFT to Submit/Pending. Here's another tip: The Plan Status icon (the yellow plus sign) will tell you who the next person to take action on the plan should be. If weeks go by after you create your IDP and you can't remember who is supposed to be the next person to take action, this icon will tell you. In this example, Kathy Fallow, the user, submitted her IDP to her supervisor Ali Kafshi. Ali has no action or approved date next to his name, so the IDP is now Ali's responsibility. He must approve or reject the plan before Kathy takes any further action.



Shortly after you submit your IDP plan, you will receive a cc of an email sent to your supervisor. Please note the email is not sent to you but to your supervisor, you are just receiving a copy. This has caused some user confusion in the past because the text of the letter states that the plan should be reviewed as soon as possible and some users think they are being directed to do something with the plan they just submitted.

It's important to realize that until your supervisor takes action on your plan, you should do nothing to that plan. Once the supervisor does take action, you will receive an email stating that your IDP has been approved or rejected.



Now let's take the viewpoint of the supervisor. I'm a supervisor and I've just received an email stating that my subordinate has submitted an IDP. I login into AgLearn and see an alert message on my personal home page stating that I have Subordinate plans that require Review and Approval. I click the link and am taken to the Pending Reviews and Approval page. From there I'll need to click the Performance Management tab to see any plans awaiting review.

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Supervisor View of Plans Waiting for Action

+ Scroll to plan that requires action and click **Review**

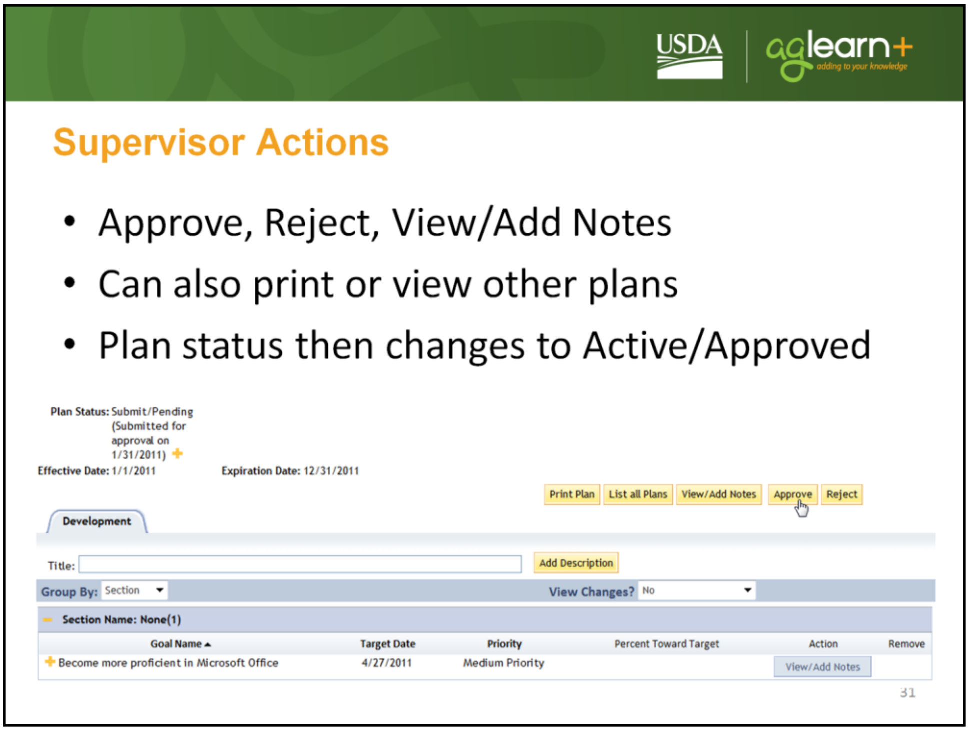
Subordinate Plan Approvals (2)

Review Subordinate

User Name	Plan Title	Plan Period	Plan Status ▲	Effective Date	Approval Date	Expiration Date	Review Type	Action
Neon, Pam	MY 2011 IDP	Calendar Year 2011	Active/Approved	1/1/2011		12/31/2011	Plan Revision	Review
Allen, Ann	MY 2011 IDP	Calendar Year 2011	Submit/Pending	1/1/2011		12/31/2011	New Plan	Review

30

I see my subordinate's name and her plan, with a corresponding Review button. I click the **Review** button.



From the next screen I can approve the plan. I can also print or view other plans. Once I click the Approve button, the status of the plan changes again. At this time the plan is in Active Approved status and I have successfully sent the IDP "ball" back over the net to my subordinate.

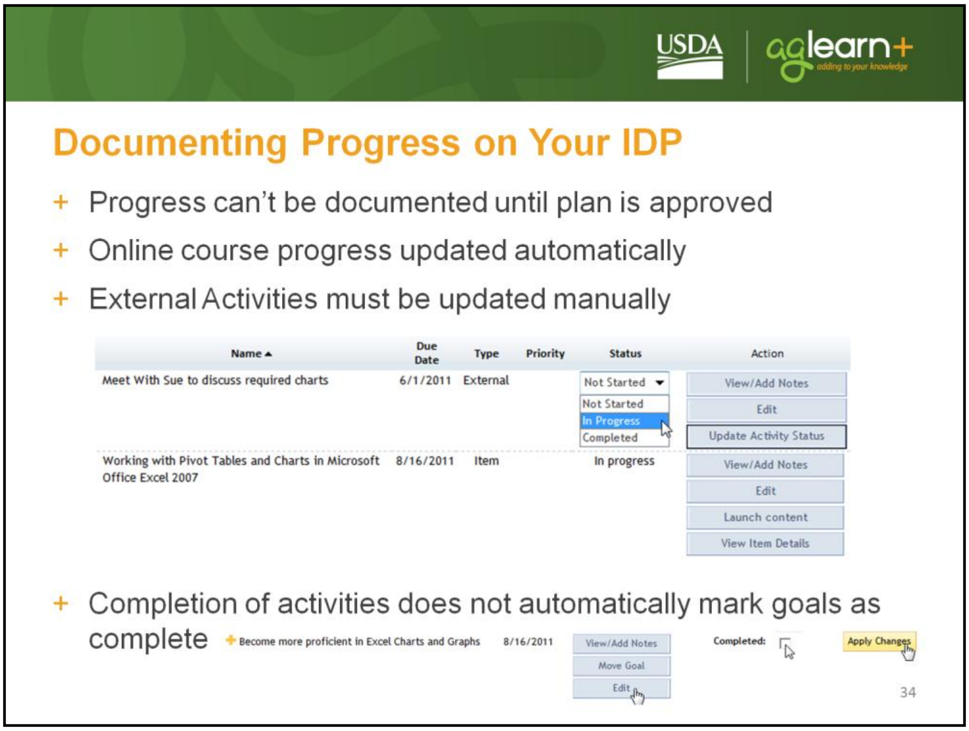
Updating Your Plan

- Once approved, plan moves to Active Approved status
- You can now make changes:
  - Add goals
  - Update status of existing goals
  - Add goal activities

32

When the supervisor clicks the Approve button, an email is generated back to you. At this time, you can go into AgLearn, access your plan, add additional goals, update the status of existing goals and add activities to goals to assist in your development.

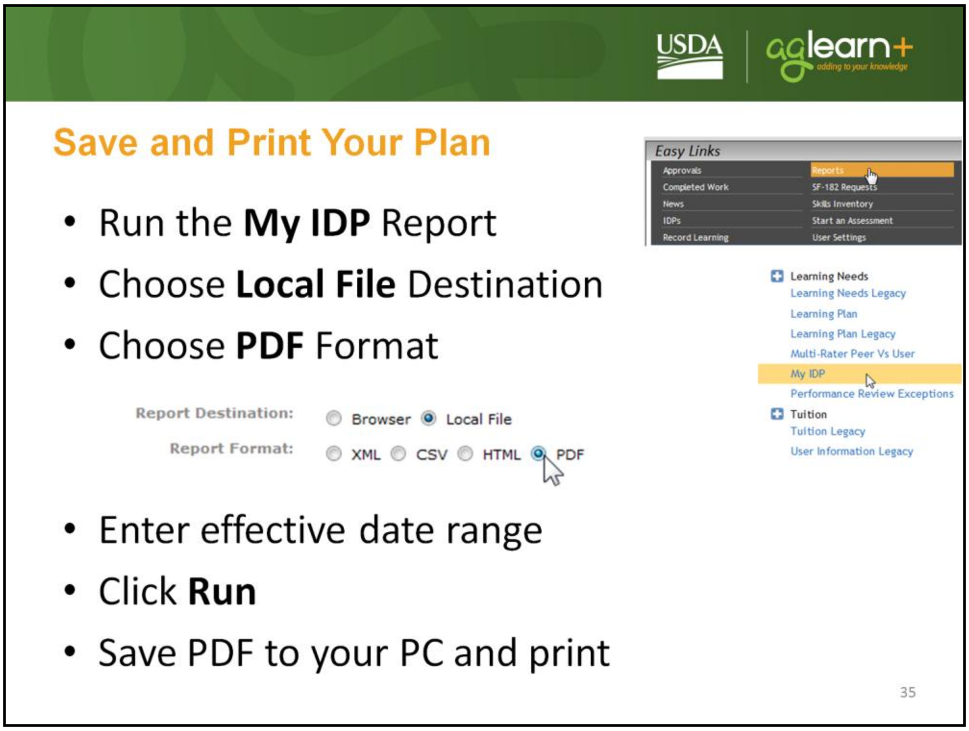
If I make changes to my IDP, such as adding new goals and activities and I want my supervisor to review the plan, I can submit the plan for approval. As soon as I click that submit button, I'll see a red alert that tells me my plan contains changes that at this moment, have not yet been approved. My supervisor will get an email, I'll get the cc of the email and the IDP "ball" has now moved over to my supervisor's "court". If I'm simply updating the progress of existing goals, the Submit for Approval button may not appear, meaning I do not have to submit the plan for my supervisor's approval.



Once the goals and activities have been identified and approved, it's time to get to work. As you make progress towards your goals, you'll need to document that progress. If your activity is an online course in AgLearn, the progress will be documented for you. As soon as you launch the course, the status will change from Available, to In Progress, to eventually Completed.

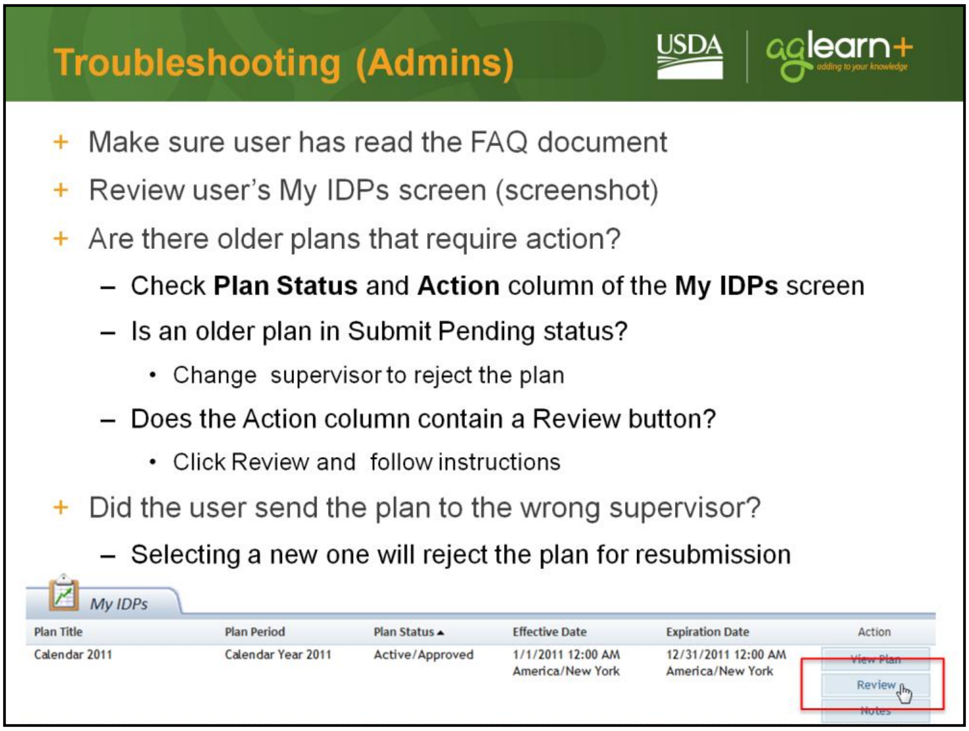
External activities will need to be documented manually, by selecting the appropriate status from the drop down list.

When all activities associated with a goal have been completed, the goal can then be marked Completed. This does not happen automatically. You'll need to click the goal's corresponding Edit button, then click the Completed check box and Apply Changes.



It’s always a good idea to save a copy of your plan in a PDF format. That way you’ll have a historical record of what you plan looked like at various stages. To save and print your plan, you should use the My Plan report, available in AgLearn. Simply click the **Reports** menu, select the **My Plan** report, choose a local file destination so that you can download it to your PC, then choose PDF format. Enter the date range you wish to see in your report, then click **Run** and save the PDF file to you PC and print it if you wish. Supervisors can run the same report, but they have the option to run the report for themselves or for their subordinates, direct and indirect.

Now let's move forward to the end of the yearly cycle. I know many of us are last minute planners, but this can cause a lot of problems when it comes to the IDP. My best tip is don't wait until the last minute to submit your plan for approval. Instead, about one month before the expiration date, make sure that you've documented all progress you've made on your goals and if you see a Submit for Approval button, be sure to submit your plan for a final review and approval. Supervisor will need time to review submitted plans and all supervisor approvals must be completed before the expiration date. Also, please note that expiration occurs at midnight on the date of expiration, not "close of business" , so the actual date of expiration is the day prior to date you see posted. At that time, plans that have been approved will automatically move into an Expired status. Plans that don't automatically expire must be resolved before a new plan can be submitted.



I've done a separate webinar for administrators and most admins have heard me identify on Leads calls what they can best do to support users who have problems. The FAQ document should be reviewed by all users before they report an issue.

The most common problem is that when a user attempts to create an IDP and submit it to their supervisor for approval, they do not see a Submit for Approval button. This is most often because they have an unresolved action that must be performed on a previous year's IDP. Admins should first ask to see the user's My IDPs screen.

If there is an older plan in Submit Pending status, a temporary change of supervisors can resolve the problem. If there is an older plan that has not expired, there may be a pending Review action that needs to be performed before the new plan can be submitted. Have the user click the Review button and follow instructions. Finally, if the user sent the plan to the wrong supervisor, a change of supervisors will reject the plan back to the user so it can be resubmitted. If any admins are unclear about these troubleshooting methods, contact your AgLearn lead to get additional information.

Summary

- IDP is a Trusted Source document – only supervisors and subordinates can make changes
- Get the IDP out of Draft status early so that goals can be identified and progress tracked
- Remember the tennis ball approach, only change the plan with the ball is in your court

38

So, to summarize,

The IDP is a Trusted Source document – only supervisors and subordinates can make changes to an IDP.

Encourage your users to get the IDP out of Draft status early so that goals can be identified and progress tracked

And remember the tennis ball approach, only change the plan with the ball is in your court!

Summary (cont'd)

- Make sure supervisor and email are in profile before the IDP is submitted
- Plans move from Draft to Submit/Pending, to Active Approved, then remain Active until they expire.
- You can add goals, activities and update status throughout the plan period

39

Before the IDP is submitted for the first time, make sure your supervisor and your email address is correctly identified in your AgLearn profile

Plans start out in Draft status and from there move to Submit/Pending, to Active Approved, then remain Active until they expire.

The IDP is a living document and it can be updated throughout the year by adding goals, activities and updating status

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Summary (cont'd)

- View **My IDPs** screen to view the status and Actions possible for all plans
- Expand Plan Status icon + to see who is responsible for next action
- Activities identify what you will do to reach your goal
- Activities can be internal (in AgLearn) or external

40

By Viewing the List All Plans screen users can see the status and Actions possible for all plans

If they click the View Plan button for any plan, they will be able to expand the Plan Status Icon to see who's responsible for taking the next action on the IDP

IDP Activities are added to goals to identify what you will do to reach your goal

Activities can be internal, meaning the training resources are available in AgLearn, or external, meaning resources are available outside of AgLearn

Summary (cont'd)

- Run a My Plan report to save/print your plan
- One month before expiration, check to see if plan must be submitted for a final approval
- ***Expiration time is midnight of expiration date***
- Review training materials before calling the Help Desk

41

It's always a good idea to Run a My Plan report to save and print your plan so that you can have a snapshot of what your plan looked like at any given point in time.

At about a month before the end of the year, make sure your plan has been updated with all the progress you've made. If you see a Submit for Approval button, submit the plan to your supervisor for final approval. Remember, supervisors, the expiration time is midnight of the expiration date, not Close of Business!

Uncompleted goals will automatically transition over to next year's plan.

And finally, the FAQ document should always be reviewed before calling the Help Desk

Training/Job Aids

- Creating an IDP in AgLearn Job Aid
  - https://aglearn.usda.gov/customcontent/USDA-AGLEARN-IDP/CreatingUpdatingSubmittingAnIDP-IM-v2%20TC.pdf
- IDP FAQs:
  - https://aglearn.usda.gov/customcontent/JobAids/Version61JOBAIDS/IDP_FAQs_2011.pdf
- Update your AgLearn profile Job Aid:
  - https://aglearn.usda.gov/customcontent/splash/pdf/UpdatingYourAgLearnTalentProfile.pdf
- Take online training
  - AgLearn IDP online course coming soon!
  - Currently links to **Creating IDP in AgLearn** Job Aid

42

In addition to this presentation, what other learning resources are available online?

First we have a job aid that will walk you through creating an IDP, adding a goal, adding and activity and submitting your plan for approval.

We also have an FAQ document that addresses most, if not all, of the questions we've received from users and supervisors to date. This is a great job aid to help users troubleshoot their own IDPs. Your AgLearn lead can also provide you with that FAQ document, as well as the slides for this presentation.

Perhaps one of the most important things to remember before you create your IDP is make sure your AgLearn profile contains your correct email address and your current supervisor. This slide provides a link to an existing job aid, if you're not sure how to do this.

It's also a good idea to take the online training that will soon be available in AgLearn. Simply search for AgLearn IDP and you'll find the Item in the catalog. Currently this item is linked to the job aid I've mentioned here, but the online course should be available in a matter of weeks. We'll announce the availability as soon as it is posted.

Thank You!

aglearn+

adding to your knowledge